

**Interview with Melissa Hearn**  
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**Interviewer: Dr. Russell Magnaghi**  
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RM: Okay, Melissa, I'd like to get some background. Could you give us if you don't mind, your birthdate.

MH: November 9, 1948

RM: We'd like to go back to your origins. Could you give us something about your academic development? Where are you from? Where did you go to school? Just give us some insights to that.

MH: Well I got my undergraduate, my MA, and my PhD all from the University of Okalahoma. I grew up in Okalahoma. I think at the time I was growing up it had the second largest Native population. Being Native is very common. I think that actually I just took Native cultures for granted. It was just part of how people lived that there were Native cultures around. I grew up about an hour's drive from Anadarco, Indian City is what they call it. There were huge Pow Wow's and festivals there every year that were major events.

RM: So these were Pow Wows and events that had become popular throughout the United States today, but at that time were pretty much native to Okalahoma and some of those...

MH: I suppose that that is true. That was in 1950. My parents were from Okalahoma and moved back to Okalahoma. My mother was from Okalahoma and my father was from Louisiana, but my Dad worked for an oil company. It was sort of like the military. They just went wherever they were sent. The home office for his company was in Okalahoma. He got a promotion and was sent to the home office. So I lived in Okalahoma from the time that I was about 5 years old on. So that was the middle 1950s. It was just what I grew up with. I went to a county school outside the city limits so there were quite a few students who were Native and who lived in a rural area. Of course there was the head count because I'm sure they got federal money for recognition of who was Native in the class. We always thought, the non-Native people thought that was a privilege. It was great, something honorable to be a descendent of a famous Native person. That was always an honor. I think what they were really doing is getting some kind of head count for federal money because it was a poor school. Now that has become the posh area of the town. That's the school to go to. But when I was here in the 1950s, we had just built a new home and it was outside the city limits so there were upper middle class kids going to this very small rural county school. But most of the students were very poor and didn't have telephones and that kind of thing. It was a very small school. There were 4 rooms and 8 grades. A cafeteria slash gymnasium in the middle of the 4 rooms. Anyway, we were kind of a close group. That was just what growing up in

Okalahoma was like. I went away for my freshman year in college in Missouri and I think that was...I would tell people that my roommate was a Cherokee and they were shocked because she was just a person. She was just a college student. I don't know what they were expecting like that was something exotic like she should wear beads and feathers or something. Many of the people one would know, happened to be Native. That was just...in 1995 when my mother passed away I went back to Okalahoma and every person I dealt with who was a professional was a Native person. Her doctor was a Native person. The funeral home director was a Native person. Anyone that I dealt with...the minister was a Native person. It hit me then after I had been away that this is how I had grown up. Native people were professionals, just part of one's life. Playmates or...in all social strata.

RM: That was something at the time you didn't think about.

MH: I didn't think about it at all. I had no conscious of that. Then after going away to school my freshman year, I came back to the University of Okalahoma. I was an English major and I think I was more interested in world lit and British lit than I was in being an Americanist particularly. There were always Native artists and writers coming into the school and giving readings. So after I got my BA I was gone for 4 years and I taught in public schools. Then I came back and got my MA and PhD. There were always Native writers. The University of Okalahoma tried to get Momaday when he left Stanford. He could have stayed at Stanford. But he was very interested in finding a community with Native people. He wanted to get into that kind of atmosphere. The story was that one of the professors was bragging at a conference that Momaday was coming to Okalahoma. Of course that was where his grandfather was from. Somebody from the University of Arizona heard about it and like double or tripled his salary offer. So he went to Arizona.

RM: At one point he was at Berkley.

MH: He was at Stanford. I'm not sure if he was at Berkley. That was how the story went. In the 1970s in Okalahoma there were the smaller schools like Northern. Smaller regional universities all developed in the early '70s developed Native Studies programs and the Talequa, Northeastern State, there are 4 levels of Cherokee language taught. At Southeastern Okalahoma State University there are 4 levels of Choctaw language taught. This has all been in place since the 1970s. That was all going on, but not at the University of Okalahoma. That was very late in recognizing Native Studies, which are really pretty fine now. It was common for Native writers to be there and giving poetry readings. I can remember going to see Joy Harjo going to read *She Had Some Horses*. It was kind of like a little coffee house. It was just common for Native writers to be part of the artistic and writer scene. When I was doing my dissertation on Native writing it was just there. It was prevalent. I had a friend in graduate school doing her study in Native American literature with one of the first people to produce an anthology of Native American literature, Alan Biele.

RM: How do you spell that name?

MH: B-I-E-L-E And he, in the late '60s, during the Civil Rights Movement, the way he tells the story, a group of Native students came to him and said we want a course in Native American literature. He said tell me what to teach and we'll have one. So they studied *Native Dawn* and the work of Vine Deloria and autobiographies and some other things. So he developed one of the first courses at University of Oklahoma. An early course in Native American literature. I think it was the first anthology of Native American literature. It had trickster tails. I never did take his class because it was part of my studies. I was going into continental drama. I ended up doing my dissertation on Garcia ??? I did have a friend who was studying with Alan Biele and she was doing her PhD work in Native American literature. It was fairly isolated and an unusual thing to do a PhD in. She is now teaching at the University of South Dakota in Native American studies. Norma Wilson. I did take Alan's course as a directed study in the summer because I was interested in it. But it wasn't something I thought I would be doing or teaching. Then when I got out of graduate school and went to the University of New Orleans, I think it was the first culture shock that I had. Real adult recognition that people didn't even know who the Native writers were. The professors in my field, I guess I was isolated getting all my degrees at the University of Oklahoma, we all knew who the Native writers were and who the new ones were and the up coming poets. One just did. Then I found out there was this large department. There were 50 people on 5 year term appointments, full time teaching all the freshman English courses. About 25-30 full time faculty teaching upper level courses. No one knew anything about Native literature. Maybe they heard of Momaday. That would be about the limit. So I asked if I could teach a special topics course in Native American literature. They were skeptical if it would fill or if people in New Orleans would be interested. The major ethnic group was African American. Of course there were courses in African American literature. There was an interest in it. I did have a class. I called my friend Norma and I wanted to know everything. I remember from being at OU but who are the new writers and she said there's a terrific new writer who published a book called *Love Medicine*. You should teach Louis Zurkard. So I got information. She sent me her syllabus and I got as much information from her as I could. I knew I had to get more background. I had only one class in graduate school and didn't have enough historical background. So I taught that course there and then when I got the job at Northern, which was fairly soon after that...

RM: You came in what year?

MH: I came to Northern in 1988. Dean Heikinen in Arts and Sciences always asked me about that. He said we have a large Native population and it would be good to have that course. It would be a great thing to have at Northern. Every time I would see him on campus he would say are you going to offer that course? I was still finishing my dissertation. For the next couple years I worked on that. I did. As soon as I finished my dissertation work then I offered a course in Native American literature. It was pretty scary because in New Orleans where there is quite a diversity in the student body, there weren't any Native people in my classroom. But here there were. So I knew that in some ways I only had very academic knowledge about Native culture or Native literature. I knew hardly any about specific Native cultures, particularly the Ojibwa culture and the nations that are in the Upper Peninsula. I was very ignorant. So it was scary to start a

course knowing how ignorant I was. I wanted it to be a good class, but I didn't want to misrepresent anything. So I did ask the students to help me and help me find speakers we could bring in. People from campus or anyone who could talk more authentically about Native points of view. The students were great. I was very naive and some of the students I didn't suspect were Native because they had blond hair and blue eyes. They said we'll help you. Shirley Brozzo was in my class. Ted Divernie was in my class. We had coffee afterward and we'd talk about things. They were very good at doing that indirect teaching and letting me know when I had gotten off the path. It helped me rephrase or present things in a better way. Or go back and be more specific. They were wonderful at being friends and teachers. I learned just as much from the people in the class. I had people come in to speak and a young man was working in Diversity Student Services now, I don't know what it was then. He's a tribal council member in Sault Saint Marie now and working on his PhD at Michigan State. I know him real well but I'm drawing a blank on names. Sometimes I can't think. He was honored as an outstanding person at a dinner. He's from the Sault tribe and a terrific guy. I think he talked about, I don't know if it was his idea or the students in the class, that we should have a minor in Native American Studies. He said after I started this class, did you know that Russ Magnaghi teaches American Indian History class and Merl Mett teaches a class in Anthropology and we've got a class in geography. So I had only been here a couple years and didn't know anybody outside my department or anything like that. But I said oh I see something and it sounds like a great idea. We could develop an interdisciplinary minor. I think part of that was my own naivety and not knowing anything about the structure of the university or what kind of things you would have to do for that. But it sounded like a real possibility. It was just a consensus, just a general idea. It wasn't even my idea. But we began to talk about it. I met you, I don't remember how it came about, but I began to find other people in other departments who were at least interested.

RM: I think you...if I remember correctly, you had a meeting with a lot of these people, people that were interested. I remember either getting there late or staying after and we had...I had updated you on what I had done in the past.

MH: Right.

RM: Then in the papers there are all the dates. I think it was 1991. This will clarify. That's when it started. Then we...I know you had the one meeting. You might have had other meetings of these people.

MH: I do remember trying to find out who I should contact and I didn't have any idea. Who in Art should I contact? Ilene Roberts. Just to find out who would be interested in teaching one and who would be supportive. Perhaps we did have a meeting. That sounds right. Anyway, it was great. I began to learn about other departments and meet people from other departments and get the larger picture of what was going on. Nancy Hatch was here and she was very supportive. She told me a lot of information about the 5 tribes here in the area, about what had been done before. A lot of campus history. She was very helpful and loaned me books. She was interesting in seeing this project go and was very helpful.

RM: I think Nancy Hatch, her and Kathy Netole were both from the Soo. I know they were both in my classes maybe in the mid '80s. They were kind of the student connector to you. Then Nancy became the Director of Native American Services?

MH: I don't know. It seemed like, and I think it's still this way, that the titles change every year but they're the same job. She was certainly a major force in the administration of connecting with Native students and doing the college day program in the Student Services for Native People. She was a major force.

RM: So you got the idea for the major.

MH: The minor.

RM: I mean the minor. Then there was something in the correspondence between you and myself about a generic course about the Native American Experience.

MH: Right. Another thing that fit in this timeframe somewhere is that...Nancy was extremely instrumental in this also, in contacting Native American people from the different tribes and we had them over to my house one afternoon. Lillian, my colleague Lillian Heldreth, who was also interested in Native studies was interested in developing a course. We talked to different people, the priest from the Keewenaw Bay was here. John Haskill. He was such an intellectual and politically astute person. He had wonderful insights and was really helpful. It was a strong consensus from that meeting that there would be support for the minor from the Native communities if we were going to teach the language. So that needed to be built into part of the minor program, that we develop a language course and find someone to teach it.

RM: You kind of mentioned it earlier, could you go into some detail about finding a person to teach the course, and the Dean's interactions?

MH: Okay. Then we had to get the course passed. I don't remember, did we pass the minor first and then add the Ojibwa language course?

RM: We'd have to look at the file. The pages were out of chronological sequence and it gets rather complicated.

MH: I can't remember exactly how that happened, what order it happened. Whether we got that course put through first.

RM: Wasn't there some problem with that course and the foreign language department?

MH: Yes. Finding a home for it was first of all problematic. The language department was fairly reasonable about it. But it really wasn't like a language course that was taught like French or German or whatever for certain reasons. I got syllabi for courses in different minors. Bob Denalstien from the Soo was very helpful. He had developed ???

for the Native Studies program. So he sent syllabi and we gathered as much information as we could and the Native students like Shirley Brozzo were happy. It was kind of an ongoing project. We agreed that there needed to be an introductory course and that became, now it's called NAS 204. It used to be UN 204. What that course was going to be like, you and I spent hours working on that. Then there was the Ojibwa language course, which was pretty much out of my field. I don't remember how I learned about Don Chosa. I don't remember if someone gave me his name and I contacted him...he was teaching the language in the Keewenaw Bay. Or whether he contacted me because he heard about it, I really don't remember how that happened. I do remember driving up there to meet him and he had his syllabi and we talked about it and had a really nice chat. He was a pleasant young man and I thought he would be great with college students and a really good person for them to relate to, to be teaching the culture and language. It was impressive with him and his work. So he helped me develop a proposal for the language course because I had no idea. He was teaching it on a much more elementary level. We compressed what he was doing. What he was teaching over two semesters we compressed into one semester to try to make a OJ 101 and OJ 102. Back to the language department, one of the things that was highly objectionable politically was that it was then called the Foreign Language Department. Ojibwa is not a foreign language. The community was not going to be very happy about Ojibwa being taught as a foreign language. So in the beginning the language was housed in that department. They did change their name and this was a major thing on their part, but it made sense to them as well. They were also helpful in the development of curriculum. We developed a plan for what if we had someone who was a speaker who came from one of the Reservations and one of the tribes who didn't need to be in 101 and could go right to 102. What kind of test would we devise? So basically it was agreed that Don, if it were agreed that he be the teacher, which it was, would administer an oral test so there would be some kind of formal way to place students who had advanced knowledge of the language. We took that through CUP and got that in place. Don still remembers going to CUP. I talked to him the other day. There was someone there from Military Science who was from South Dakota. He objected very strongly to the sample syllabi because it mentioned doing a unit on Leonard Peltier and he said, "Well you can't do that. That doesn't have anything to do with teaching language or culture." And of course he was very much on the side of the government and the FBI. And Don was so composed although the questions from CUP could sometimes be quite overwhelming, he just looked up at him and said, "Leonard Peltier is one of our people" and of course the man didn't know that he was a Chippewa. We were making a point that in the Ojibwa language class that one would be teaching about culture and history as well as the history and that all of that would be part of the course. It's just one of those little anecdotes that I remember. That was the only time it got a little hairy and Don just in his very smooth and quiet way handled it and just in his tone, which was very moderate and calm, said everything that needed to be said. It did pass and then there was quite a struggle over what kind of course when we were putting together the whole package, what kind of course UN 204 would be. We got in a lot of discussions Marla Buckmaster about that, and she had an idea about what the course would be like, but we didn't have anyone available to teach it in quite the way that she would have liked it to be taught. And one of her ideas was that we'd have five or six people and each one would teach a segment of it. So it would be kind of like an

introduction to all the different disciplines, which would have been logistically really hard to pull off given how one would get paid for teaching a course if we had five or six people who taught it much less provide continuity for the students. It's not that one can't have a course like that, and I think that she was basing her idea on a course that was like that. How we were going to keep that course from overlapping with any of the other courses so that it wasn't repetitious. By this time, Lillian had developed a course in traditional Native American literatures. I think she calls it Traditional Oral Literatures. I was putting through the course that I had taught as a temporary course, as a 295. Putting it through as a regular 300 course. So we had both of those courses that because regular courses in the English departments. So this course, we agreed that it was the consensus of the faculty that were involved in developing the proposal, of the staff like Nancy Hatch, and people who were advising and helping with the proposal, of the students that a course called Native American Experience should be taught by a native person. But until we had a Native faculty member to teach it, who was going to do it? So just so that the course could actually operate and we could get the minor started, you and I agreed that we would teach it, and of course it was going to be, as you and I designed it, pretty much history and literature because that's what we knew. We were doing it the best that we could to make it a team taught course and we were going to teach it for banked credit, and that's how we worked out the logistics of the financial situation. Then the semester before it was offered, I got a call from the speech department, from Jim Lapore, and he said, "I have a former student from Northern. I remember him and he sent in an application. He has a PhD and he sent in an application to teach here. He's a member of the Keweenaw Bay tribe, and we don't have an opening but since you're starting this Native Studies program, here's someone who is a member of a local tribe and he's just sent us a resume." And so he passed it on to the English Department, and it was Jim Spesser, and so we did indeed have some vacancies that we needed to fill in the English Department. So I was on the executive committee and we did have some positions, we needed to do some hiring. We had an amorphous job description that had everything we would ever need. It was so obviously a committee job description with no focus, just a grab bag of what everyone wanted, and one of the areas was Native Studies so we did have a position that had that in it. I don't remember if I wrote or called, but I contacted Jim and asked him if he would be interested in applying for it, and he had a communications and speech background, but he had written a full-length play and that's what he had done his dissertation in was writing drama. So that seemed to fit with the English Department. That he was a writer, he had published critical articles, most of his publication was in the area of Native Studies, and that's where he had done his focus, and so on. He came up here and was quite charming, interesting, kind. We did hire him, and of course we were very interested in having him teach this UN 204 class and design it in the best way that he could.

RM: Let's just kind of backtrack. You started the minor. This is 1991. You were in charge of the minor for a number of years because I remember we used to meet in this room.

MH: When we first started meeting we were still in the library. Our offices were all in the basement of the library.

RM: And then you were over here, but you were still in charge, and then you had that fabulous circle discussion over at the Lake Superior housing thing and you brought Native people and everyone sort of showed up, Marla...

MH: Yeah, that was sort of the first talking circle. That was when we were just first getting it started and we had administrators there.

RM: Diane came. Everyone that was either teaching, administrative, interested, and the native community.

MH: Was that after we had gotten the minor passed? I think it was.

RM: Yeah. Things were going along by this time.

MH: I was listed as the director. Then after we hired Jim, we became co-directors of the minor.

RM: The minor, but not the studies.

MH: Right, well it's called the Native American Studies minor. All we did, we had that meeting and so it was just kind of...I don't remember. To bring the people of the university and the Native community and the students together and get people's thoughts and communicate and talk about what we were doing. We had this loose idea that was built into this structured minor called the advisory board. I guess I like to have parties and invite everyone you can think of and then develop a working group that can deal with academic problems with the teachers and students. A group of dedicated people who were going to deal with the academics. But to have an advisory board and get a sense of what the community and administrators and students and what they were feeling and thinking about it, what was important to them. I wanted to have those kinds of meetings to keep the communication really open.

RM: One of the outcomes of that talking circle was...probably the Native community brought it up...I was taking notes.

MH: Taking notes, writing things down is a western thing and not appreciated.

RM: I remember in the process it was brought up that we should have some kind of handbook because there were things going on that the Native community wasn't too happy about. It wasn't a big deal, but I remember there was discussion about creating some kind of handbook.

MH: Right. We did create one.



RM: Did it ever get printed? I think a lot of that, you can correct me, you were going along with that and then Spesser came in. Then you started to pass the torch to him. This is just my general recollection.

MH: Right. And that was the idea of having a co-directorship. The plan for the Native American Studies was to hire a director. The year before Jim came I was getting a core group of people together. Leonard, who was head of the English Department, and that was where the minor was housed. This was right after the minor was passed. Lillian knew Bob Hansen at one time.

RM: Marla, Ilene, Robert, that was about it.

MH: We went through a process of establishing a vision, a mission statement, what our objectives were, goals and how we were going to meet those. It was not very long after Appleberry had those big meetings. Actually a lot of that was carried forward. It became part of the structure and culture of the university. We have department mission statements and blah blah blah. We were able to propose things in terms of how our mission coincides. At that time, after the first meetings and we had goals, goal number 5 was diversity. I don't remember exactly how it was stated, but in the top 5 goals of the university was to create more diversity on campus. I don't know if that was helpful in passing the minor, but maybe it was. I think maybe that was during the proposal time that it was hopeful to point out that this minor was in line with the top 5 goals of the university.

RM: This was 1991, February Appleberry had that big meeting. Then I think, again we'd have to look at the dates because they were very close. Diversity part tied in with the development of the minor and the whole program. I think we also started to get information from administration that they were happy about this and the way it was going. All of this was coming together and fitting in with the larger picture. What didn't happen 20 years before when we were talking about it, we didn't have the mission statement, goals, etc. The whole thing went no place. This time it had something to attach itself to the university.

MH: And it had strong administrative support. If the administration had not wanted this to go through they could have said no. One of our goals was to get a director. That was the number one goal. We needed to have a Native scholar. And that would also bring a faculty member and role model on campus who is a Native person who is not only needed for the integrity of the program, but for outreach and a lot of other reasons. That was the ethical thing to do and also the most academically integrity.

RM: So we get the Native scholar Jim comes.

MH: Sort of out of the sky.

RM: I remember him. I was invited to the interview sessions. I was impressed with him. I think Ray Ventre was in charge of the search committee for the department. He brought me in.

MH: Right at that time there was also a shift in the administration. Jim Heikkinen retired. We hired Mike Marsden.

RM: But there was a year, and this is when all this was happening. Heikkinen left in '91. That was the time... I remember the event. Appleberry had the big meeting. Resigned within 2 or 3 days of that meeting. So like in March of '91. Part of it, he wanted Heikkinen out. So Heikkinen retired from the Deanship sometime after that. Certainly by July 1. Then there was a year with Leonard in as acting head. I think '91 to '92.

MH: That's why Ray was head of the department.

RM: So all of these things are happening at the same time. Then Marsden came in, I think in the fall of '92. All of this stuff was, again we'll have to go through the dates, but it was all happening.

MH: I can't keep it straight. And I had forgotten about some of these meetings and things.

RM: At least in my mind, once I look at the dates and when the various people resigned and whatnot.

MH: I think I have correspondence on my computer that I can print out. That would help too.

RM: Would fill in a lot. Probably like that meeting with the talking circle.

MH: It might be...

RM: I remember that was like March of some year.

MH: If that got transferred to the computer I now have...in the various...I remember doing it at home and having computers in the office too.

RM: I know I had to buy my own in '87. Only certain people got them. Okay so all this is happening. Spesser comes in, your co-director.

MH: Are you interesting in the politics of this?

RM: Yes.

MH: Ray was a exuberant supporter. And ??? was too. They were really glad to have the Native Studies program housed in the English department. The department was really

supportive of it. My colleagues were wonderful about the whole thing. It's not like the other people were hostile or anything, but during the time of getting the proposal through, it was mostly from the Sociology Department where the objections came from. Richard Wright was the spokesperson for the objections to the proposal. And I sit around, a proposal that Shirley and I typed up on a Saturday afternoon. We got the proposal started. It was a draft and we meant for it to be a draft. It was just an experiment. As I said, I was not a scholar in that area, but I got as much help from Nancy as I could and from Shirley and whoever I could get help from and put together a draft of the proposal and sent it to the different departments. And people were pretty good to give me constructive criticism. Ilene Roberts, I remember her calling back and she could be strident, but she was precise. She was usually very good hearted and sincere in what she did. You can't call this fine art. It's not art period. She helped me with the language and re-phrasing all of that. Lois Hersem from Education, I don't think, you have to look more at the inter-tribal warfare and be realistic. This is not...studying Native cultures doesn't mean you're studying world peace. You can't say that. Different people were really good at giving constructive feedback. But when it hit the Sociology Department...they just had a fit and thought it was a terrible proposal. I'm sure it needed to be improved and it did improve. But it was a draft. But I think that she just thought it would be so mediocre, that it was a terrible proposal. But it was just a draft. I remember doing it on purple ditto and sending it out. That's the way we...

RM: Was that one of the last copies that went out that way?

MH: Well purple ditto was with us longer than that, but not too much longer. But I do remember it being purple. Anyway, she was really opposed to it. I think her concerns, she took to Richard and he wrote them down articulately and sent them to cut. Not to cut right away. I heard a lot of feedback and I did talk to Marla and the Sociology Department was pumping itself up to oppose this. Ultimately...

RM: This was the course or the minor?

MH: The minor. So talking to Marla, which was just a lesson in itself. Of course you need a lifelong study in Native cultures and she was very well informed in what she knows. So I had a lot of things to work on. Overcoming Marla's rejections to the proposal helped me write a much better proposal. There were things that needed to be tied up or re-thought or re-stated. I think maybe at that time Nancy Hatch came into the picture and she and I worked, as I recall, we worked in my office and spent long afternoons. She sent me tons of information and helped me with a lot of tribal background. Things that I just didn't know anything about. She was great at helping to improve the proposal. Actually, Marla's criticism was enormously helpful because it was all good for it. It was a little hostile, but in the end, it was very very helpful because it was so specific. The proposal was revised and taken to cut and there were numerous revisions. Answering questions. Most of the questions that arose or objections to the language did come from the Sociology Department. But I knew what most of them were and I was able to answer them because I had these long talks with Marla and was prepared to be able to counter argue them. So it passed and the objections, it was

stressful at the time, but the objections made it stronger. It was helpful. That was part of it. Just a little piece of it. It wasn't against having a Native Studies program. It wasn't that kind of objection like there was something wrong with having Native studies, just how it was implemented. I think the people had a right to complain about that because my working on it and not having any academic background in that subject. I think they had a right to make objections, whether from the community about how things were presented, that's where Nancy was really helpful. From Marla who devoted her life to these studies...

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MH: So anyway it passed and we felt very celebratory about it. Temporarily I was the director of the minor, which meant coordinating things for the students really. Meeting with an advisory board and getting ideas about what we should be doing. We all agreed that we needed, this came from University Planning, was that the university should be taking advantage of the area in which we work. So we interpreted that to mean that we should be inviting elders and people from the Native communities to come in and speak to classes. That that would be something we would try to do. We didn't have much of a budget. We ordered one periodical, the *American Indian Quarterly*, that we didn't have. We really needed to have the *American Indian Cultural Research Journal* which we never ordered. But now it's available online, so we don't need to have a subscription to it. At least that's what I understand. So finally we do have the *American Indian Cultural Research Journal*. That and the *American Indian Quarterly* are the two major publications that we didn't have in the library but we did get *American Indian Quarterly* in 10 years of back issues. That was basically, we didn't ask for a lot of money other than that to improve our resources. Maybe we got money to buy books too. I think we did. I remember having a conversation with the advisory board and Marla said we don't need any books when this was in the planning stage and I said yes we do. We need poetry. She said oh sure. That was not her field, but she felt like her field had been covered. But the literary field was not covered. So we did get some money, I think several hundred dollars. So we did buy books. We did hire Jim Spesser. Ray was really supportive. He invited people to come in and meet him and he sent out a letter saying that Jim would be the head of Native Studies. That was just a little premature because we were only hiring him to be a member of the English Department. So it hadn't gone through the channels. It wasn't something that one wouldn't suspect would happen. But it hadn't happened. So I think it sent an earthquake to the Native community. Who is this guy? Where did he come from?

RM: He was from here, but he was teaching in Tennessee and had a Tennessee accent so he kind of came through as does he belong?

MH: He graduated high school in L'Anse. But he hadn't really grown up there. He had been sent there to live with his Grandmother when he was in high school. He was a member of the Keweenaw Bay tribe. But he really had not grown up in the Upper Peninsula. He had grown up in some place in Illinois. He had not grown up on a reservation. He had not grown up with the Ojibwa culture per say, other than his mother

was Ojibwa. But not among people of that culture. He had been very close to a group of Lakota people, and I can't remember where. So a lot of things he learned about Native culture, he learned as an adult from the Lakota people that he knew. He became very involved politically with the Leonard Peltier Case. He wrote his play, that was part of his dissertation about Leonard Peltier. He had read the entire transcript of the trial, 1000s of pages and had done a creative work that lined out the facts of the trial. Most of the evidence was thrown out in the other trials that was used to convict him and so on. So he had attracted the attention of the FBI because of his work on behalf of Leonard Peltier. He had gone to see Leonard Peltier in jail. So he has become a political activist. He's a very mild mannered person. But he had been contacted and he felt that he had been shadowed. It's probably true. Anyone that's part of the American Indian movement, and I believe he was a member of NA as well. Anyone that was in that movement are still being followed by the FBI. And of course 2 FBI agents were killed and that's what Leonard Peltier is in jail for. That was the same kind of sentiment that was being echoed at the cut meeting by the Military Science person who was against even mentioning Leonard Peltier in the language courses. So that was Jim's background. He really wasn't of the area, but he was literally from the area. It sent the wrong message, and it wasn't Ray's fault because it was a natural assumption to make, even though it was jumping the gun a little bit to announce it as a matter of protocol. People had a right to expect that this might have been the head of Native American Studies. I remember meeting with Nancy Hatch, and she said in the parking lot when she was looking at his resume before he got here, she said he's a phony. This is terrible. We can't have him as the head of native studies. Are you sure he's a member of the tribe. And I said well actually he is. I called them and asked them, and they said yes he was. And that was the end of any sort of peaceful relationship with the multicultural department because Nancy really decided intuitively that this was not the right person, and that she wasn't going to support him, and that he was using his native heritage to get this job, but that he really wasn't of the native community. He didn't represent them. I can understand now why she thought that. So when he came here for an interview, Nancy called Ray, and there were opportunities for people in the native community to come and meet with him, and Nancy called Ray and said we want to have an interview with him by ourselves with no one else present and just herself and selected native student she had chose, and it was kind of a test. A kind of trial by fire. I she the real article or not? That's my interpretation of it of course. And Ray said yes that would be alright. We can do that. So Jim went to this meeting and he wasn't familiar with a lot of the customs and things in the native community, and so the kind of things that they did in the meeting he was unfamiliar with. They asked him who his mentors were, where he had learned a lot about native culture, and he said from Scott Momaday's works, and so his approach was very academic. Nancy particularly didn't like Scott Momaday because he had been here one time as a speaker and he spoke about the Kiowa people in the third person, so she put him tin the category with all people who were exploiting their background, who were not truly native and did not represent native people. That was the absolute wrong thing for him to say to her politically, but how could he have known. Momaday's a really well respected native figure. So everything that he said and did was wrong in the meeting and the native students who were there came out against hiring him. They didn't want him to be the director. It was the end of the native studies program having a working relationship with

the multicultural department. Whatever her suspicions were, they were confirmed. Someone gave me the statistics on how many native people with PhD.s there were and how many had graduated that year, and there were something like four. Finding a native scholar to head this program at Northern Michigan University in a remote area was not going to be easy. We felt that he had the qualifications and the English department was satisfied with his teaching at a communication in Tennessee. He had taught remedial writing and all kinds of things that would be helpful to us, and that he would be a good member of the English department even though his credentials were in speech. There were lots of places where he would be helpful and he was genuine. He didn't say that he was what he was not. He was very open about where he had learned and what he had learned and how he had turned to discover his native heritage as an adult. It wasn't the ideal. So there were a lot of political objections to his being part of the program. The year he was hired, we spent Labor Day weekend writing a grant. When did Buken come? A year before Marsden?

RM: No. Buken came around '89 I think. There was a big shift of people there.

MH: Right. Buken was very supportive of the department. He was here during that time. He was quite willing to be very positive about it and EPC and see that we got the funding we needed. So we had great administrative support. Buken had found, going back a year before Spesser. Buken found a grant that we could apply for to start this Native Studies program. So the spring before, in the winter semester before Jim was hired, an interdisciplinary group of people got together and wrote this grant. I think you helped with it, Nancy helped with it. Sarah Doubledee helped with it. She had serious political objections to Jim Spesser. This came later. She had a right to have those opinions. I was the coordinator of the grant writing. In the middle of all that, we were writing a pre-proposal which could only be about 4 pages. It was a Phillip Morris grant. Getting that off in the middle of that, the Senate passed the proposal for the Native Studies program. Everything was lined up and rolling along and we got on the short list, the Phillip Morris short list for the grant and we could re-apply with a Fullard grant, it must have been due right after Labor Day. So when Jim came on board that September, he and I spent the entire weekend finishing that grant and doing the enlarged version of it. Side by side, let's do this, let's say it this way. It was a completely collaborative event. I could never have written it without him. His expertise and influence were highly important on getting the grant, and that we had hired a Native scholar to be the co-director of the program, said a lot about our commitment to diversity and so forth, to the Phillip Morris Company anyway. He went up to receive the grant, \$100,000 grant to be distributed over 3 years. He was going to be the co-director of the grant program with me. He was new. He needed someone to show him the ropes. That was the idea with me hanging on to the co-director.

RM: We need to stop. I'm meeting Diane at 3:30.

(just visiting)